

27 February 2023

Written testimony submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Housing Committee in support of HB 6633: AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLANS FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Monica van Beusekom. I am a resident of Storrs-Mansfield and a member of the Unitarian Universalist Society East in Manchester. My congregation is a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA), a broad-based organization of 49 faith institutions working together on this issue.

I am writing in support of HB 6633. This bill will make our suburbs more inclusive places to live and contribute to the economic growth and revitalization of our cities. Modeled after successful legislation in New Jersey and informed by Raj Chetty's research on economic opportunity, this bill has the potential to generate:

- 240,000 units of sorely needed market rate and affordable units over 10 years
- 63,000 jobs (full time equivalents sustained for ten years)
- \$9.8 Billion in state and local tax revenue
- \$47 Billion in income for Connecticut residents

I support this bill for several reasons. First, Connecticut desperately needs more affordable housing. I have seen this firsthand as I have helped two individuals find affordable housing, one in Mansfield and one in Manchester. Finding decent housing with access to public transportation and with a reasonable rent proved very challenging and in each case took several months. In fact, research shows that, in Connecticut, a family has to work 91 hours a week at minimum wage to afford the average two-bedroom apartment. Building more affordable housing—high density and near transportation hubs—is essential to the well-being of low-income households. It is also key to becoming a more climate friendly and resilient state.

Second, this bill has the potential of breaking down the barriers that cause racial and economic segregation. Currently two-thirds of Black and Brown residents live in only 15 of Connecticut's 169 towns. These communities are also home to the overwhelming majority of affordable housing. Fair Share Planning and Zoning will help to generate affordable housing across Connecticut, and facilitate the emergence of more economically and ethnically diverse communities. This kind of diversity benefits us all.

We need this bill to make sure our planning and zoning systems are fair. We need it in order to increase the availability of affordable housing across the whole state. It will also help boost our economy.

Sincerely,
Monica van Beusekom
Storrs, CT